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A new mural at Tempe High School pays homage to one of the school's most noted alums.

Students and school and district officials celebrated the dedication of the Ira A. Fulton Athletic Complex on Oct. 30. Located on the north side of the campus, the complex encompasses the ballfields and gymnasium. The blue and white mural is visible from Mill Avenue.

Because athletics played a key role in Fulton's youth, Principal Mark Yslas said naming the athletic complex in his honor was fitting.

"Ira shares how being part of the football team

really taught him a lot of life lessons that he brought into adulthood and helped form his character as a husband, father and businessman," Yslas said of the 1950 graduate. "Ira is extremely supportive of students getting involved in athletics."

Fulton's name is synonymous with home development, but the diverse and extensive philanthropic efforts of the Tempe native and his wife Mary Lou have garnered as much attention, particularly when it comes to supporting education at all levels.

Through the Ira Fulton Challenge, in which Fulton pledged to match what the foundation raises, using each homecoming as the benchmark, nearly \$100,000 was raised for the Buffalo Foundation, the school's alumni association.

Foundation President LuAnn Kenner said educators and alumni hold fundraisers and obtain donations.

"Ira never forgot where he came from. He wanted to build a community of giving," Kenner said. "The money is something we appreciate, but what we really appreciate is that he inspired us to come together. He inspired us to reach out. The one thing in common we have is Tempe High."

The mural, which features Fulton's full name in big block letters at the complex entrance serves as a reminder to students that they are part of a proud legacy that includes many prominent alums like Congressman Harry Mitchell, theater owner Dan Harkins and, of course, Fulton.

"Our students are beginning to sense that they are part of a large familia of great alumni and they are extremely appreciative and blown away by Ira's generosity and willingness to put his resources into Tempe High," Yslas said. "The mural, it added a very personal touch."